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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THREE CENTRAL VALLEY RESIDENTS INDICTED
FOR CHILD PORNOGRAPHY OFFENSES

FRESNO – United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that a grand jury in Fresno returned separate indictments against ERIK ALAN PETERSEN, 21, of Lemoore, California, and JOHN WILLIAM SWEET, 49, of Reedley, California that charge each man with one count of receipt of material involving the sexual exploitation of minors and one count of possession of material involving the sexual exploitation of minors. The grand jury also returned an indictment against KENNETH HENRY McDONALD, Jr., 53, of Reedley, California that charges him with one count of possession of material involving the sexual exploitation of minors.

The indictment against PETERSEN alleges that from approximately April 9, 2005, through December 6, 2006, he used the Internet and a computer to receive and possess images of child pornography. The case is the result of a joint investigation by the Lemoore Police Department, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and the Fresno office of United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The indictment against SWEET alleges that from approximately February 2003 through January 2007, he used the Internet and a computer to receive and possess images of child pornography. The case is the result of an investigation by the Fresno office of United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The indictment against McDONALD alleges that on January 30, 2007, he possessed numerous Polaroid photographs and VHS videotapes that contained images of child pornography. The case is the result of an investigation by the Reedley Police Department with assistance from the Fresno office of United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Fresno office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The coordinated efforts of law enforcement in these cases were undertaken as part of Project Safe Childhood (PSC). This is a United States Department of Justice initiative established to increase federal prosecutions of violent sexual predators of children, and to reduce the number of internet crimes against children including child pornography trafficking. As a part of PSC, the United States Attorney's Office has teamed with federal, state and local agencies and organizations to increase law enforcement presence on the internet, and to educate the public

about safe internet use, thereby reducing the risk that children might fall prey to online sexual predators. For additional information on the PSC initiative, please go to www.projectsafefchildhood.gov or call the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California and ask to speak with the PSC coordinator.

All three defendants will make their initial appearances before a federal magistrate judge on February 16, 2007, at 1:30 p.m. The possible penalties for receipt of child pornography include a mandatory five-year and maximum twenty-year prison term. For possession of child pornography, the maximum term of imprisonment is ten years. All counts provide for a possible lifetime term of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. However, the actual sentence will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables, and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

The charges are only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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